

DIGRESSIONS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

---

THE CHORHAM BOOK OF ENGLISH  
PROSE

LETTERS TO MY GRANDSON ON THE  
HAPPY LIFE

LETTERS TO MY GRANDSON ON THE  
WORLD ABOUT HIM

LETTERS TO MY GRANDSON ON THE  
GLORY OF ENGLISH PROSE

LETTERS TO MY GRANDSON ON THE  
GLORY OF ENGLISH POETRY

QUIET HOURS IN THE TEMPLE

QUIET HOURS IN POETS' CORNER

# DIGRESSIONS

BY THE HON.  
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" Authors sprinkle their works with pleasing digressions,  
with which they recreate the minds of their readers."

DRYDEN.

## PREFACE

"As I walked through the wilderness of this world" are the opening words of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and if the world about old Bunyan seemed to him to be a wilderness how much more so seems the world through which we now so blindly wander.

Marcus Aurelius said that a man who had lived forty years had seen everything there was to be seen in the world.

No one now could begin to acquire familiarity with even a small fraction of the possible knowledge that is available for the inquiring mind, even if he lived to be a hundred, never played bridge or golf, and laboured for sixteen hours a day.

But let us console ourselves with the reflection that all the knowledge that is of the least service for the edification of character

## *Preface*

and the acquisition of wisdom, can be laid up in the treasure-house of the heart as easily to-day as in the times of Bunyan or of Marcus Aurelius.

Through the wilderness of this world there is still a somewhat neglected pathway open to simple quiet folk, who desire to listen more to the heart than the intellect, who respect magnanimity more than mental dexterity, who refuse to be dazzled by the increasing accretions of material knowledge which never elevate conduct nor aggravate virtue, who believe that no really great work in the world is ever accomplished without the emotion of reverence, and who love "this land of such dear souls" in which we were born.

This little book is not the work of a learned man, nor of a scientific man, but only of an observant man, who has looked about him with the desire to perceive the truth of things

It has been written in all manner of places : in the Law Courts at Assizes, in hotel bed-

## *Preface*

rooms, in railway carriages, and in the library at "The Ford."

It has no form nor design—no proper beginning, middle, nor end. Of course it does come to an end at last, but without any particular reason, and so does this preface.

S. C.

THE FORD, CHOBHAM.

*August 1925.*



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# DIGRESSIONS

## I

### ON WHAT IS PERMANENT IN LITERATURE

I OFTEN wonder what literary works of the present day will be esteemed by future generations.

The best test of the permanence of a man's writings has always seemed to me to be the answer to the question whether it comes from his heart.

I am not considering the writings of people of no ability. Enormous masses roll from the press every year behind which there is no mind. These interminable books are almost all of them frankly designed merely to entertain persons of no literary knowledge or taste during a railway journey, or to make dull hours tolerable to the idle. They do serve a purpose, and no doubt may not

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only dispel lassitude but on occasion console affliction.

Such books live for six weeks or three months and then disappear, and are never reprinted

Lives of everybody down to the defunct municipal dustman, and adulatory biographies of notorious persons still alive, crowd the shelves of the lending libraries, and in a couple of years repose in the penny dips on the pavement outside old bookshops.

It is melancholy to reflect on the vast amount of labour spent in blowing those literary soap bubbles which endure only for a moment

A great style alone can give any permanence to the lives of the departed. Also a fine style may sometimes keep alive to after time writing that, being produced with a purpose only applicable to the circumstances of the hour, has lost interest to a later generation

Controversial writing is of this kind, but unless the style be of a very perfect character,

## *On what is Permanent in Literature*

perish it must. Vivid and eloquent passages advocating what has now long been universally conceded inevitably fail to rouse the appreciation they enjoyed when they were delivered. Another kind of writing that is almost certain to perish with the lapse of a few years is that which in its tendency is destructive only.

Destruction is so much easier than construction. We can learn that from a child's box of bricks. There are few human institutions that a bright and shallow person cannot effectively attack, with the immediate applause of the groundlings. And to attack persons is even more easy than to attack institutions, and wins even more easily that same applause.

Much ability has been expended in both these forms of destructive writing in this century, but though the success in both cases has been great for the time being, it is very doubtful whether fifty or even twenty years hence these <sup>isolated, shallow</sup> lucubrations will survive.

In much of the present clever writing,

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the reader will search in vain for a page or even a single sentence informed by the spirit of reverence for anything in this world or the next. I should have thought that a single flower plucked in a field would enforce this attitude permanently upon the mind of anyone who looked at it with intelligence and attention.

One of our most brilliant writers of to-day has captured our interest by his delight in paradox this has given his writings a manner which to many of us is very attractive, but which leaves us with a misgiving from which we with difficulty escape, that the paradox may sometimes be pursued at the expense of everything else

Moreover, writing may be too brilliant for the English people Literary fireworks arouse their suspicions They prefer a steady fire to a Katherine wheel, and a hearthstone to a pinnacle,

Very occasionally, as in the case of Bacon's Essays, work entirely produced by the mind without any trace of the influence of the heart

## *On what is Permanent in Literature*

may take its place among the writings that survive the test of Time. But such condensed aphorisms of wisdom, so lucid, so luminous, so penetrating, could hardly suffer eclipse in any age.

Their impregnable gravity associates them in the public mind with the steady fire, and the hearthstone, and ensures their acceptance. But the conclusion of the whole matter is that "he that burns most shines most," and that work that comes from a throbbing heart outlives the most lively coruscations of mere mental agility, because "a loving heart is the beginning of all knowledge."

## II

### A WONDERFUL HUMAN DOCUMENT

THE 18th of November, 1924 SWANSEA.

In the Assize Court to-day, in the trial of Margaret Lennox for the murder of her two little children, there was suddenly lifted the veil that commonly covers the lives of the very poor, and the pitiful results of their utterly reckless and improvident marriages

The poor girl with two little children was forced to seek shelter in the house of her mother in law, where she was an unwanted guest. After enduring every manner of insufferable humiliation, and after witnessing, herself helpless, the never-ending bullying of her little ones by the mother in law's own big children, the wretched woman, distracted with misery, determined to leave the pitiless world and take her little ones with her. She failed in her self-slaughter. To



## *A Wonderful Human Document*

the constable to whom she surrendered herself she made a statement which at the request of the Counsel engaged I myself read to the Jury.

Here it is :

I married my husband when I was eighteen and he was seventeen. I had worked four years in the Post Office. For two years we lived apart, he with his mother and I with my mother, because we couldn't get rooms.

Then we went to live with his mother.

He started a fruit shop, but it failed. Now he is working with William Young, a potato merchant, as warehouse foreman ; sometimes down at the docks and sometimes in Custom House Street.

Since we have lived with his mother she has done nothing but grumble about the disorderliness of the house.

I admit that when I got married I couldn't do a lot of house work, because I had never done a lot of it.

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The greatest trouble seemed to be the children's toys on the floor.

She forgets that her own children have been small once. I couldn't keep on picking them up, but she would keep on nagging and finding fault with it.

If my hubby's brother and sister would let my children alone it would have made things easier for me. One day the children wanted a tent out at the back of the house. I made a tent and took out a table and some biscuits. They had the biscuits on the table.

The boy couldn't even leave them alone out there. Every time he passed he would kick the table over. He is nineteen and old enough to know better. Then when the children would cry, his mother would get on to them. She even smacked them for it, and all through the boy or his sister. Another time my little Peggy was sitting on the stairs, and the girl, his sister, gave her a kick. I saw her do it. That was too much for me. I went on to her about

## *A Wonderful Human Document*

it. Then her mother chipped in and took her part, saying the child had no business on the stairs.

They would never let my children alone, and when I said anything to their mother she wouldn't believe it.

The girl is about twelve.

We had a row on Wednesday morning about the same thing. She was in such a temper that she was throwing the spoons about the house.

So in the afternoon I decided to take the children out of it all for an hour or two.

I asked them if I should take them to Granny's or to Llandaff Fields. They both said Llandaff Fields. When we were ready to go out I saw the razor on the mantelpiece.

My eyes seemed glued to it.

I made to the door once, but something seemed to make me go back and put it in my bag.

I don't know what made me do it.

## *Digressions*

We then went down to catch the bus, but when we got there we found the bus had gone. There was another bus there, so we got on that and got out at Culverhouse Cross. I knew my way about there because my hubby and I used to go there for walks before we were married, and have been there since also.

We walked up to Wenvoe, and the children started picking strawberries. The place was covered with them.

While they were picking them and playing in the bushes I sat down and thought of the misery my children and myself were living in. The more I thought of it the more miserable it seemed to me.

It was then I made up my mind to do what I did do.

I opened my bag and drew out a half-sheet of notepaper. I think it was a half-sheet and some envelopes

I don't remember how many envelopes I had. I think it was two.

## *A Wonderful Human Document*

I had a pencil in the little pocket of my coat. When the little boy saw them he asked me to draw him a puffa.

I remember drawing an engine on one of the envelopes.

While he was looking at it I wrote to my hubby. I did not care so much about myself, it was the children I was thinking about. I knew they would be happy up there. Now I know that they are happy because I saw them myself the other night. I would be happy too if I was there with them. They were playing hide and seek when I caught the youngest one first.

Then I caught the oldest one.

When I had cut myself I dropped the razor. I looked for it again, but couldn't find it in the bushes.

I then ran from there.

I knew that they were out of their misery and I would be with them.

Thank God, my children are happy now.

## *Digressions*

Their life was nothing but misery, and all through his mother.

His father is all right. He is a nice quiet man.

Whatever she said to my hubby he would never answer her back. If he stayed down reading after we had gone to bed, she would order him to bed.

Several people have told me that they wonder how I have kept my tongue quiet.

She is like milk when she is out, but they all don't know her when she is in the house. She has a terrible temper and no one will answer her back, not even her husband, he is too quiet.

What I have told you is the truth and nothing else.

MARGARET LENNOX.

The letter that she wrote to her husband on the half-sheet of notepaper, while the little boy was looking at the "puffa" she had drawn for him on the spare envelope, was as follows.

## *A Wonderful Human Document*

MY DEAREST ARTHUR,

Forgive me for what I have done,  
but I can stand no more.

Your mother, God forgive her, has made  
my life a "perfect Hell."

I have come back to the spot which  
brings back the happiest memories of my  
life. I have taken my kiddies with me  
because to leave them to your mother's  
mercies would be too great a punishment  
for them.

Good-bye, my dearest, my heart is too  
full to write more.

Think of me kindly.

MARGARET.

The Jury did not want to hear much more  
after listening to these wonderful documents.  
Without leaving the box they found the  
only verdict in their power, that the woman  
was guilty but insane at the time she com-  
mitted the act.

No art could adorn or literary skill enforce  
the awful poignancy of this poor woman's  
simple story.

Seldom does such a piece of work find its way into the dusty <sup>archives</sup> ~~purloins~~ of the Courts.

It possesses all the unsurpassable qualities of the Bible condensed, restrained, direct, and absolutely simple, no weaver of romance could put together an invented story with such penetrating power. Can any doubt her simple faith that God woul' receive and make happy her little ones "up there"?

I do not know whether her husband's mother was present in the Court when I read these documents. If she were there, even her self-confidence must have suffered abatement and her peace of mind been invaded by the thought of what her words had effected.

"Nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none."

I left the Court hoping indeed that these little children are happy now "up there," and with the dreadful knowledge that life has, all about us, more true and terrible tragedies than any invented by the imagination of man



### III

#### ALAS FOR MARY MORGAN !

THE 31st of January, 1925, at PRESTEIGNE.

I have visited again to-day, as I always do whenever I come to Presteigne, the grave of Mary Morgan, who was hanged at the four cross roads outside the town on the 13th of April, 1805, for the murder of her child.

Many years ago when I first came round this circuit I had the good fortune to encounter in the churchyard an ancient sexton whose grandfather had been sexton before him, and from whom the whole sad story had come down to him.

Here was no case of "The short and simple annals of the poor."

There is a large black slate at the end of the grave, as it were barring the poor child from the East and its hopes, and upon it

## *Digressions*

are inscribed these perhaps well-meant but sanctimonious words

### TO THE MEMORY OF MARY MORGAN

Who young and beautiful endowed with a good understanding and disposition but unenlightened by the sacred truths of Christianity became the victim of sin and shame and was condemned to an ignominious death on the 11th day of April 1805 for the Murder of her Bastard Child Roused to a first sense of guilt and remorse by the eloquent and humane exertion of her benevolent Judge (Mr Justice Hardinge) she underwent the sentence of the law the following Thursday with an unfeigned repentance and a fervent hope of forgiveness through the merits of a redeeming intercessor

This stone is erected not merely to perpetuate the remembrance of a departed penitent but to remind the living of the frailty of human nature when unsupported by religion.

Digging down into the ground with my stick at the bottom of the stone I uncovered the name cut there of THOMAS BRUCE BRUDENELL BRUCE

The sexton could throw no light on that subscription long covered up by the earth Perhaps this Brudenell Bruce was marshall to Mr Justice Hardinge when he came to Presteigne in 1805, and ordered the erection of this stone

The old man told me that from his grand-

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## *Alas for Mary Morgan!*

father he had learnt that Mary Morgan was the most beautiful girl that ever was seen in Radnorshire. That a great squire who dwelt in a famous castle made love to her, betrayed her, and himself gave her the knife wherewith to kill the child. So poor lovely Mary Morgan dreamt her innocent dream that love was the crown of life and a foretaste of the joys of Heaven, and awoke to find it the gateway of death and the road to perdition.

Then to the bar of man's judgment was she brought: and where was the man who betrayed the poor child for his pleasure, abandoned her for his convenience, and prompted her to slay the evidence of what she dreamed was love and found was insult? Was he at her side to share before the world her agony and her shame, or was he at home upon his knees in the anguish of remorse. No! not there! but upon the Grand Jury that found the true Bill against the girl sat the father of Mary Morgan's child.

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The dreadful trial proceeded; the jurymen were marvellous good men, not one of them would risk his precious soul to save poor Mary Morgan's life, and so for conscience' sake they were deaf to the promptings of pity.

But though his honest name has not come down to us, and has been forgotten in the lapse of time, there was present in the Court one gallant gentleman who instantly took horse to London to seek for a reprieve. A wild ride of three hundred miles! he got the reprieve, and we may be sure that as he galloped through the night under the stars what man and horses could do was nobly done; yet, alas for Mary Morgan! Love and death had been the same to her for an hour before he reached the awful gibbet at the four cross roads.

He could do no more for her in life, but I think it must have been he that put the little stone at the head of her grave with these few words on it.

# *Alas for Mary Morgan!*

IN MEMORY OF MARY MORGAN,

Who suffered April 13th, 1805,

Aged 17.

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." John 8, v. 7.

The big black stone at her feet records the verdict of religion. The little stone at her head proclaims the judgment of Christ.

A hundred and twenty years have passed away since the lovely child was taken from prison to the Court, from the Court to the gibbet at the four cross roads, and thence to the grave.

There underneath the grass she lies, her broken heart long commingled with the dust, and if she be not forgiven, there is no mercy in the sweet Heavens.

## IV

### THE ANCIENT CITY OF BATH

I HAVE been spending a few days in Bath, which I suppose is really the most ancient city in England.

Nothing is very certainly known about it till A.D. 44, but that is a very respectable time ago from which to date a modern city. According to Tacitus this part of England was subdued at that date by the armies of Flavius Vespasian.

The Romans called the place *Aquæ Solis*—the waters of the Sun—a beautiful name, raising in the mind something more splendid than the domestic and useful utensil by which it is now described.

The Romans fortified *Aquæ Solis* and connected it with great roads to Cirencester and Ilchester, and by the reign of Hadrian

## *The Ancient City of Bath*

and Severus it had become the chief city of Roman Britain.

To the sun as the source of life and maintainer of health, the beneficent properties of these waters were attributed by the Romans, and for many thousands of years the steaming waters have been welling up copiously no one knows whence.

I suppose modern geologists would say that *aquæ terræ* better describes the wonderful spring. But, after all, if the earth was once part of the shrinking nebula that ultimately concentrated into the Sun, its central heat that warms these gushing waters came in the far depths of stellar time from the great parent of all the planets, and the Romans were nearer the truth than they knew.

For nearly four hundred years during the Roman domination *Aquæ Solis* flourished as the chief centre of that august system of law and tranquillity. When it is remembered that the whole South of England was the

## *Digressions*

scene of a majestic civilisation for a period of time as long as from the reign of Elizabeth to the present date, that the country was covered with cities, roads, public buildings, and stately villas, it is remarkable how little remains above the ground to bear witness to the greatness of those times—an archway at Lincoln, a bath in the Strand, a fragment of a wall here and there, still stand above the earth, all the rest lies buried deep under the soil.

The plough had for centuries passed to and fro over Silchester before antiquarians dug down and revealed the pavements and walls of the city; and the noble Roman setting of the spring at *Aquæ Solis*, now revealed by careful excavation, lay far below the surface of the present town and its streets and buildings, and there they had, in the words of Sir Thomas Browne, "quietly rested under the drums and tramlings of three conquests"

Bath was resorted to for its beneficent waters all through the centuries, and in the



## *The Ancient City of Bath*

early part of the seventeenth century was beginning to be a fashionable place.

Sir Edmund Verney of Claydon in August 1635 wrote to his daughter-in-law :

I cannott prevaile with y<sup>r</sup> Husband to leave mee without a quarrell, therefore good heart forgive us boath, since his absence is against boath our wills, hee is every day in the bathe, I praye God it may doe him goode ; for my parte I am suer I find none in it, but since I am come heere, I will try the uttermost of it, that I may not be reproacht att my returne for doeing things by halves ; att our first coming the towne was empty, butt now itt is full of very good company, and we passe our time awaye as merrily as paine will give us leave, and soe dearest heart, farewell,

Yo<sup>r</sup> lovinge father and faithful friend.

In the eighteenth century Bath had its real golden age and became the acknowledged centre of rank and wit and fashion, the home of intrigue, the scene of elopements, and the

## *Digressions*

arena of the duello, when every gentleman wore a sword, and every lady a patch, before commerce had blackened the sky, before democracy had clothed gentlemen as waiters, and before the penny press had vulgarised the world, when rank was gorgeous, precedence the breath of life, and its art "the nice conduct of a clouded cane"

All this splendour and elegance has passed away, and the stately buildings are no longer peopled by the great and filled with pomp, nor are the streets crowded with the aristocracy of England in sedan chairs. But it is still a beautiful city, and may yet again, should fashion so decree, become the resort of such magnificence as with difficulty survives.

But whatever may come and go, the waters of the Sun still bubble out of the earth, and the forlorn houses of the forgotten great still stand in their serried terraces and crescents and the great pump-room echoes to the footsteps of a few lonely wanderers.

## *The Ancient City of Bath*

Thoughts of passion, dreams of beauty,  
    Sojourned here and fled away ;  
Leaving but the skull that held them  
    Bleaching in a drear decay.

Thus do all our efforts perish,  
    Even the highest and the best ;  
Ruthless Time for ever turning  
    Human grandeur to a jest.

## V

### GEOFFREY TOYE AT THE ROYAL EXCHANGE

THE 19th of December, 1924.

To-day I went at one o'clock to the Royal Exchange, at the invitation of my friend Geoffrey Toye, who has organised a choir and orchestra entirely composed of members of Lloyd's and those they employ.

This admirable band and choir repaired to the Royal Exchange, and with the permission of its custodians proceeded to give a performance of carols and other music during the luncheon hour, open and free to the general public.

I found the great building crowded to the walls with City men eager to participate in this remarkable and really beautiful enterprise of my friend and his associates. After several carols had been charmingly rendered,

## *Geoffrey Toye at the Royal Exchange*

there followed the hymn "O come, all ye faithful," sung to the "Venite Adoremus" familiar all over the world.

In the singing of this hymn the whole vast concourse was invited to join, and, turning from his orchestra, Toye, with uplifted baton, faced the great audience and conducted the united singing of that mighty volunteer choir.

The effect of this overwhelming sound was extremely moving. I could observe that many grey City fathers were unable wholly to restrain their tears. After some other carols, "Auld Lang Syne" was sung in a similar manner, all joining, and then with really majestic effect "God Save the King" closed this most memorable and inspiring gathering.

It was a fine conception thus to make music lift the City toilers for a brief half-hour up out of their daily round, and afford them the occasion to give expression to that spiritual side of life which in most of us remains dumb from lack of such an opportunity as this for utterance.

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More than this, I recognised in such a scene the wonderful unity and kindly comradeship that is hidden among us Englishmen for want of such means as this for its demonstration

Not a soul in that great gathering could have left the building without a sense of loving kindness towards his fellow-Londoners and a glowing patriotism in his heart

The young men and girls of Lloyd's, who have joined with Geoffrey Toye to organise this remarkable free public concert, must have devoted much of their spare time after the hours of their daily work to practice and rehearsals

I expect they hardly realise the beauty of the list they have bestowed upon their fellow workers of the City

There is an immense silent force of comradeship and good will towards each other buried away in the hearts of all Englishmen who love their country, against which all the preachers of class hatred and organisers' disruptions will clamour in vain

## VI

### MY GRANDSON IN SALISBURY CATHEDRAL

ALTHOUGH we may make of animals the sweetest and dearest companions, though we may win their love to a degree seldom achieved between human beings, though with dogs we seem to perceive an intelligence comparable with our own, and kindred emotions and capacities for joy and sorrow, for loyalty, steadfastness, self-sacrifice, and a blind trust in us beyond anything that we concede to each other, yet they lie for ever behind a veil we can never penetrate. We cannot, if we try, conceive what it must be to be such a creature, without the power to comprehend the simplest proposition of the reason, without the mental means of speculation or inquiry into the visible universe about them,

## *Digressions*

with eyes that cannot see a picture save as a piece of flat matter, and who if they could speak would be unable to express more than three or four simple wishes and emotions which they would repeat with monotonous iterations

How fortunate for us are these impregnable limitations, though we sometimes in our affection for our pets idly, and without thought, wish they could speak

Little children are separated from us in a manner that at first sight seems somewhat similar, but the child is in truth entirely different. The young mind has before it an ascending scale of possible thought, speculation, and imagination, denied for ever to the rest of created life

It looks out upon the phantasmagoria of the world about it with alert inquiry and wistful wonder. It loves to be told marvels, and sweetly to believe fables and fairy tales. Imagination comes before reason, and fancy before experience

Pure as the snow upon the mountains and innocent as the blue sky above them, the



## *My Grandson in Salisbury Cathedral*

dawning mind of the little child, incapable of the blight of evil, unsoiled by even the conception of sin, forms and develops behind a curtain that we cannot penetrate.

Only on some rare occasion does a sudden word or two from a little child reveal with startling clearness the hidden visions of its soul, as a flash of lightning on a dark night reveals the hidden world.

Never shall I forget one such beautiful revelation of the inward imagination of the mind of a child. Travelling by road from Swanage to my house at Chobham we made a halt at Salisbury, and my little grandson of six went to the cathedral with the rest of the travellers while I was occupied with some other occasions. They had the good fortune to happen on a choral service.

As we drove away over the downs and looked back at the spire far visible across the country I asked the little boy whether he thought the cathedral beautiful. He answered, "Oh yes, and I heard an angel singing."

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Oh ! the wonder and glory of it ! Oh ! how sweet and lovely are the visions of childhood ! and alas ! how soon must they "fade into the light of common day."

Oh, that we with our boasted knowledge and lost faith could wander into a cathedral and, wrapt in the adoration of those that built it, hear an angel singing !

## VII

### THEOBALD AND POPE'S DUNCIAD

I HAVE often thought how utterly the reputation of a writer may be blasted by the spite of a great and recognised luminary in the literary world. I can cite two such cases in the eighteenth century, which time and just criticism have hardly, if at all, succeeded in correcting.

Pope having published an edition of Shakespeare in 1725 in which, as Lowndes with fairness says, he indulged his fancy rather than employed his industry, it was soon after in 1726 followed by "Shakespeare Restored," published by Lewis Theobald, in which many of Pope's blunders and errors were exposed and many most felicitous emendations of the text were suggested which have since been accepted and adopted.

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Thereupon Pope held up Theobald to ridicule in the *Dunciad*, of which he was the chief butt in the first edition, and again jeers at him in his letter to Dr. Arbuthnot.

Then in 1728 Pope brought out his second edition of his Shakespeare, and with abominable impertinence incorporated all Theobald's corrections and adopted most of his emendations of the text without a word of acknowledgment, and in a note in the last volume once more insolently attacks the man the results of whose superior industry and research he has stolen.

Theobald then issued his own edition of Shakespeare in 1733, which quiet uncontroversial students accepted as a standard work

Warburton, who affected to be Theobald's friend while he lived, proceeded as soon as he was dead to bring out an edition of Shakespeare in which he grossly attacked Theobald in a preface packed with malignant traducements of the friend who could no longer reply. His motive seems to have

## *Theobald and Pope's Dunciad*

been to creep into the favour of Pope by abetting that poet's own mean attack upon Theobald.

After Cibber had been made Poet Laureate Pope altered the *Dunciad* and substituted Cibber for Theobald as the hero of the piece. And this is the form in which the satire is now generally found in modern editions of Pope's works.

But the tale of injustice to this excellent and innocent scholar was not closed with the dishonest venom of Pope and Warburton.

Dr. Johnson seems to have taken Pope and Warburton's estimate of the unfortunate Theobald as not requiring his own inquiry or investigation, and without studying Theobald's edition with real care he joins in the shameful and unjust detraction of his work, and in the preface to his own edition of Shakespeare calls him "a man of narrow comprehension and small acquisitions" and generally pours contempt upon him.

I am ashamed to say that Coleridge continued the tradition, and speaks of him with

## Digressions

detraction and contumely in his Lectures on Shakespeare.

And at last we come down to Mr. W. J. Courthope's careful *History of English Poetry*, in the fifth volume of which, published in 1905, Johnson's contemptuous phrase is quoted and adopted without investigation or criticism where, alluding to Pope's substitution of Cibber for Theobald in the *Dunciad*, he writes :

Johnson says: " he has depraved his poem by giving to Cibber the old books, the cold pedantry, and sluggish pertinacity of Theobald " ;

and to this estimate of the unfortunate Theobald Mr. Courthope opposes no qualification.

But against all this careless injustice, based originally on the personal pique of Pope and the sycophancy of Warburton, it is a great satisfaction to observe that the public nevertheless bought Theobald's Shakespeare so steadily and continuously that after the first

## *Theobald and Pope's Dunciad*

edition in 1733 there appeared subsequent editions in 1740, 1752, 1759, 1762, 1767, 1772, 1773, and 1777.

One man of letters and critic, in the last century, did take the trouble to look behind the malice of Pope and Warburton, and Mr. Churton Collins wrote an article in the *Quarterly Review* in 1892 doing full justice to the unfortunate Theobald.

## VIII

### THE FOURTH LORD CHESTERFIELD

THE other character which the critics of a century and a half have carelessly traduced, under the influence of a letter and an epigram of an illustrious literary luminary, is Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth Lord Chesterfield

Dr Johnson pronounced the epigram and wrote the letter. He said that Chesterfield's letters to his son "teach the morals of a courtesan" (he used a grosser word) "and the manners of a dancing master," and he wrote or, more correctly, recited the celebrated letter

For one person who to-day has read Chesterfield's letters to his son there are, I suppose, a thousand who are familiar with the famous epigram, and as for Johnson's letter, in the first place its felicity of diction and pungency of satire command our admiration so im-



### *The Fourth Lord Chesterfield*

peratively that we forget the prejudice that informed and the spleen that dictated it, and in the second place there is no very trustworthy evidence that it was ever written, much less dispatched, to Lord Chesterfield.

Boswell is the authority upon which the matter seems generally to rest, and this is what he says about it :

Dr. Johnson appeared to have had a remarkable delicacy with respect to the circulation of this letter ; for Dr. Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury, informs me that having many years ago pressed him to be allowed to read it to the second Lord Hardwicke, who was very desirous to hear it (promising at the same time that no copy of it should be taken), Johnson seemed much pleased that it attracted the attention of a nobleman of such respectable character ; but after pausing some time, declined to comply with the request, saying with a smile, " No, Sir ; I have hurt the dog too much already " ; or words to that purpose.

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Boswell himself tells us that for many years he solicited Johnson to favour him with a copy, but that "he delayed from time to time to give it me"

Not until 1781, twenty years after the supposed dispatch of the letter to Chesterfield, did Johnson dictate it to Boswell, "from memory" !

Boswell says that Johnson had at some time dictated another copy of it to Mr. Baretti, but we are not told at what date.

Lord Chesterfield died in 1773 and therefore, according to Boswell, no copy of the letter existed outside Johnson's memory till Lord Chesterfield had been in his grave for some years

Boswell next says that Mr. Dodsley told Dr Adams, who told Boswell, who tells us, that Mr Dodsley once saw the letter on Lord Chesterfield's table, that Chesterfield read it to him, and remarked on it "This man has great powers," and proceeded to point out the severest passages and observe how well they were expressed This hearsay story

## *The Fourth Lord Chesterfield*

conveyed to us through three consecutive persons is not very trustworthy evidence that Chesterfield ever received the letter.

But if it were true, what a tribute would it be to Chesterfield, what a proof of his unruffled urbanity, observing with detached appreciation the merits of the letter as a composition every sentence of which was framed to pour scorn upon himself ! what a proud indifference, rendering the letter more a source of mortification to its writer than to its intended recipient ! Boswell hardly appreciated how such a story would redound to Chesterfield's credit. But the authority for it is too slender for credence.

Neither Boswell nor anyone else seems to have asked Johnson what answer he received from Chesterfield. No one can deny that Chesterfield was a masterly letter-writer himself, and he might perhaps have enjoyed unsheathing his rapier for a bout with so redoubtable an adversary as Johnson ; yet where is his reply ? The whole passage

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in Boswell dealing with this affair displays a fierce and turbulent endorsement of Johnson's adverse criticism of Chesterfield.

Boswell has enough sense of fairness to quote the very splendid praise of Johnson written by Chesterfield in the *World* newspaper, which without any question must have solidly assisted the sale of the Dictionary, and by which Johnson in 1755 must have much benefited.

The atrocious crime of being a patron of Letters has seldom been visited with such biting sarcasm. That Lord Chesterfield praised Johnson's Dictionary at a time when such commendation could be of most service to its author is made the chief ground of offence by Johnson.

Had the praise been earlier it had been forgotten; it was delayed till it could the better provoke the sale of the book. In his asperity the old doctor admitted no obligation for that praise; he could not, however, deprive Chesterfield of the pleasure he probably enjoyed in conferring it.

## *The Fourth Lord Chesterfield*

To have requited the benefit he certainly enjoyed from Chesterfield's praise by the dispatch, to him who thus conferred it, of the celebrated letter would not have been so noble an achievement as Boswell would have us regard it, and I think it would have been unworthy of so great a man as Johnson. Johnson, as we all know, was in the habit of writing speeches and sermons and letters which others delivered and to which others appended their signatures, and there would be nothing uncongenial to him, or averse from his literary habit, in composing an imaginary letter for private recitation to his friends aimed with sardonic humour at the illustrious nobleman whose reputed supremacy in the world of letters may not unnaturally have been displeasing to one conscious of superiority. In all the circumstances we should remember that composing the notorious letter, committing it to memory, and dictating it to Boswell, when Lord Chesterfield had long been dead, are not evidence that the splendid and courteous nobleman, who

had just done him a substantial service, ever received it

Finally the memoir of Lord Chesterfield by William Ernst in four volumes contains no mention of the receipt of this letter !

In judging of the character of Lord Chesterfield we shall do him a great injustice if we accept the splenetic dictum of a man who was in the habit of being governed in his opinions by passionate prejudice

Anyone who will consider Chesterfield from the life he led and the things he did and wrote will inevitably discover that he was upright in a venal age, that he was wise in an age of much folly, and that he was courteous, wide-minded, generous, and most kindly Throughout his long life he was the inveterate opponent of gambling of all sorts, the evil results of which were manifest in the society of which he was an ornament ; and so deeply did his condemnation of the vice affect him that in his will bequeathing property to Philip Stanhope, his heir in the Earldom, he made the following provision

## *The Fourth Lord Chesterfield*

In case my Godson, Philip Stanhope shall at any time hereafter keep, or be concerned in keeping of, any race horses or pack of hounds, or reside one night at Newmarket, that infamous seminary of iniquity and ill manners, during the course of the races there ; or shall resort to the said races, or shall lose in one day, at any game or bet whatsoever, the sum of £500 ; then in any of the cases aforesaid, it is my express wish that he, my said Godson, shall forfeit and pay out of my estate the sum of £5,000 to and for the use of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

Chesterfield put the Dean and Chapter in, because, as he dryly remarked, they had made him pay so exorbitantly for the ground on which he built Chesterfield House that he was sure they would exact the last farthing from Philip if they could.

It is brought against him that he set great store upon manners. Well, that does not

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make a man a dancing master, it only makes him a gentleman.

He is accused of writing in the style of an aristocrat. Well, he was one, and even in these days it is not yet a crime to be well born

He looked upon the mass of mankind much in the same manner as did Matthew Arnold, who called them Philistines, though without the latter's playful assumption of an Olympian air; for he said that being with Addison and Pope was to him like being in the company of the greatest princes in Europe.

His good heart constantly appears in his letters to his godson "Humanity," he says, "inclines, religion requires, and our moral duty obliges us to relieve, as far as we are able, the distresses and miseries of our fellow-creatures"

When he was Viceroy of Ireland, he made himself so beloved that the people universally mourned his departure. His letters are absolutely unaffected and are



## *The Fourth Lord Chesterfield*

the finished expression of a man of exquisite culture.

It would have been an affectation for Johnson to dress in satin and lace and present himself to the world as belonging to the society in which Chesterfield was born, lived, and died. And it would equally have been an affectation for Chesterfield to wander about the Strand on foot in stuffy old brown clothes and worsted stockings.

But if Johnson felt a secret irritation at the external distinctions that separated him from Chesterfield, we must conclude that the greatest men can sometimes suffer from the chagrins that assault their inferiors.

The fame of Johnson has enabled him to induce generations of men for a hundred and fifty years to regard with unjust contempt a man in many ways as good as himself, who lived an upright, dignified, refined, sober, truthful, sincere, and kindly life.

## IX

### ON QUEEN ELIZABETH

MOST persons' opinions on historical characters are founded on general conversation, not on personal study of history. From youth up they hear such an one praised and such an one condemned by others who have no better authority for their laudation or censure than what they have themselves heard said in like manner during their earlier generation.

I find that to many people who have read my little book on the Temple it has come as a shock to discover the horrid cruelty perpetrated by Sir Thomas More upon the brave young Templar Bainham. When once a character has been classified as virtuous and praiseworthy by the general voice of conversational mankind, custom seems to

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## *Queen Elizabeth*

exalt it more and more till it shines like the sun, but without its spots ! It is much more pleasing to discover on careful research that a person of reputable life and blameless mind has been unjustly traduced by the careless world, than to take the halo from the brows of the acclaimed saint, and reveal the mean heart concealed under the white robe of hoary tradition.

One of the greatest myths current among mankind is that which celebrates the greatness of Queen Elizabeth.

Never has England produced such a galaxy of great men as adorned her reign, but they were great in spite of her.

A more exasperating ruler can seldom have worn a crown ; those who served her with unselfish devotion were certain to be betrayed and disavowed if adventures into which she deliberately launched them were not ultimately successful, or if successful threatened her with any trouble at home or abroad.

First Murray and then Morton she induced

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to support her policy in Scotland with promises made on her honour as a Queen, which she failed to keep, with the result that she left them to die at the hands of their enemies.

“Wherever in the history of these times,” writes Froude, “the Queen’s hand is visible, there is always vacillation, infirmity of purpose, and generally dishonesty; where her subjects are seen acting for themselves, whether as seamen, soldiers, merchants, pirates—in any and all capacities—there as uniformly is decision, fierceness, often cruelty, but invariably energy and vigour.”

The history of her dealings with the Low Countries is a series of betrayals and deceptions.

She sent eight thousand Englishmen across the North Sea to prevent or revenge the fall of Antwerp, and then when they had landed would not allow them to fight, would send no money or support of any kind, and in ten months half these brave deserted men were dead of misery, exposure, and starvation.

Froude, whose tireless industry ransacked

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every letter and document of her reign, came to the dreadful conclusion that "obligations of honour were not only occasionally forgotten by her, but she did not seem to understand what honour meant."

Nothing in her whole life was so base as her conduct in the matter of the execution of Mary Queen of Scots.

She repeated in every detail the mean and lying conduct which she displayed over the execution of the Duke of Norfolk, when having herself ordered his execution she endeavoured, says Hume, immediately "to throw the whole blame and odium of that action upon Lord Burleigh."

In the case of Mary Queen of Scots she desired Lord Howard to tell her Secretary Davison to bring the warrant for the execution to her to sign.

Davison accordingly brought it and put it before her purposely with other papers. He told her that among the documents for her signature was the one Lord Howard told him she had sent for.

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She signed them all, including the warrant, and threw them on the floor

At first he thought she meant not to speak of it, but presently she said she had delayed so long before signing it because she wished to show how unwillingly she did it. She then asked him if he was not sorry to see such a paper signed. He answered that he was sorry the Queen of Scots had made it necessary, but that it was better that the guilty should suffer than the innocent. She told him to take the warrant to the Chancellor, get it sealed as quietly as possible, say nothing about it, and send it to the persons who were to see the execution done. She desired to be troubled no more about it till all was over

Davison, feeling uncomfortable about the tremendous responsibility laid upon him, went to Burghley, who called together Leicester, Howard, Hunsdon, Cobham, Derby, and Sir Francis Knollys

Burghley induced them all to share with him and Davison the risk of carrying the

## *Queen Elizabeth*

warrant to execution. They all seemed to anticipate that as soon as the Queen of Scots - was beheaded Elizabeth would endeavour to suggest that the thing was done without, if not contrary to, her intention.

She wanted it done, but she wanted others than herself to take the blame if blame there were. No sooner was the execution over than she began expressing pretended dismay and indignation, swearing that Davison had betrayed her.

Perceiving that such protestations would not be accepted by Europe unless some culprit was punished, she threw the helpless Davison into the Tower. All the ministers besought her to pause before taking such a dreadful step with a faithful servant. She stormed and raged at them and ordered Burghley out of her sight. Then she tried to get the judges to condemn him, but only partially succeeded; the judges, perceiving that to acquit Davison altogether would be to condemn the Queen, fined him ten thousand

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marks, but she dismissed the blameless man from all public service, she enforced the fine, his family were ruined, and he was left to languish in the Tower. When after about two months Burghley ventured into her presence we learn that " Her Majesty entered into marvellous cruel speeches with the lord treasurer, calling him traitor, false dissembler, and wicked wretch, commanding him to avoid her presence, and all about the death of the Scottish queen " And so she railed like a fish-wife at the great and long-suffering minister who for years had served her and his country with noble wisdom and stainless probity.

But in spite of all this no one was deceived who did not wish to be.

" Elizabeth's dissimulation," says Hume, " was so gross, that it could deceive nobody who was not previously resolved to be blinded "

Her letter to James King of Scotland announcing the execution, which is printed by Camden, fixes indelible perfidy upon her.



## *Queen Elizabeth*

MY DEAREST BROTHER,

Would God thou knewest, yet fittest not, with what incomparable grief my mind is perplexed for this lamentable event which is happened contrary to my meaning, which for that my pen trembleth to mention you shall fully understand by this my kinsman.<sup>1</sup>

I pray you that as God, and many others, can witness my innocency in this matter, so you will believe that, if I had commanded it, I would never deny it. I am not so faint-hearted, that for terroure I should fear to do the thing which is just, nor so base or unnobly minded. . . .

Persuade yourself for truth, that as I know this is happened deservedly, so if I had intended it, I would not have laid it upon others.

No more will I impute to myself that which I never thought.

Whenever Elizabeth was telling the most

<sup>1</sup> Sir Robert Carey, who carried the letter to Scotland.

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patent falsehoods she invariably called God to witness her veracity. True greatness of character is incompatible with the heartless desertion and betrayal of those who served her faithfully, with continual moral cowardice, and with habits of finished mendacity.

That she was really reluctant to send Mary Queen of Scots to the block is clear, for it must be remembered to her credit that throughout the whole time of the latter's residence in England Elizabeth never entertained any animosity of a personal kind towards her, although Mary never ceased her plotting and nursed in her heart against Elizabeth an undying hatred.

A very unlovely characteristic of Elizabeth was her parsimonious meanness; not even urgent danger to the country could move her to the most absolutely necessary expenditure.

When the Spanish Armada was expected in the Channel Elizabeth deliberately starved the sailors in her fleet, and gave them such food that they contracted dysentery from

## *Queen Elizabeth*

it. "Unable," says Froude, "to endure the sight of their patient suffering, Drake and Howard ordered wine and arrowroot at Plymouth on their own responsibility for the sick beds. When all was over, the Queen called them to a sharp account for an extravagance which had saved possibly a thousand brave men to fight for her. Howard disdained to defend himself, and paid the bill out of his own purse."

She was physically as brave as a lion and quite unterrified by frequent plots to assassinate her. But many, if not most, people are physically brave, which is a quality they share with tigers and many other animals, and also with some criminals and most beetles. It will not suffice by itself to make anyone great.

The illustrious statesmen, writers, and men of action who surrounded her have raised her in the public parlance to a position of greatness that in truth shines from her only by reflexion from the glory of that splendid race of men about her.

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The period has justly been designated in common speech as "the great reign of Elizabeth," and this has served to confer upon the Queen herself a reputation for personal grandeur of character which she never at all deserved.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I am aware that in another book of mine I allude to "the great Elizabeth," thus exemplifying in myself the force of thoughtless custom!

## X

### THE APOTHEOSIS OF MURDERERS

FOR a second time within a few months, a man has murdered a girl who loved him and buried her body in the ground outside his house.

Again the shouting penny papers are making the cowardly brute the hero of the day, with pictures of him in every attitude, and paragraphs in black capitals all about his clothes, his hats, his boots, the colour and expression of his eyes, how he brushes his hair, his height to an inch, and his weight to a pound. No poet, no statesman, no orator, no divine, not even the King or the Prince of Wales, competes in these newspapers with the villain whom they vie with each other to make world-famous.

When the abominable creature comes to

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be tried at the Assizes, the effect of all this apotheosis of him is seen in frantic crowds of hysterical females surging into the Court, and outside round the "Black Maria," to watch the demeanour, or to catch a glimpse, of the miserable object whom these papers have elevated into a kind of newly revealed heavenly body.

There follow after his inevitable conviction and sentence monster petitions signed by innumerable donkeys to the Home Secretary to save the brute from the gallows. Sympathy is whipped up by every conceivable device for the heartless ruffian. Descriptions appear with startling headlines of his sleepless nights, of the meals he eats or does not eat, of his pallid cheeks and large luminous eyes, of his sorrowing mother, his anguished sister, his pathetic aunt. His whole family are visited by reporters who record grief-stricken interviews with every relative whose address can be unearthed.

In all this hubbub and to-do the poor little slaughtered girl who went to her doom

## *The Apotheosis of Murderers*

full of trust and love is never mentioned or thought of—no tear is shed upon her awful and untimely grave, the appalling horror and suffering brought upon her poor mother, and father, and brothers, and sisters, and aunts, causes not a moment's uneasiness to any reporter or editor. No allusion to them is permitted to deflect for a moment the blaze of illumination that surrounds the murderer like a glory.

And so on to the end—his last words, his firm step from the cell to the gallows, the High Sheriff's tears, the Chaplain's prayers, all, to the smallest detail, are set out as though they were recording the history of the demise of the greatest of men.

Chips of wood from the Crumbles' bungalow and feathers from the chickens at Crowborough at one or the other scene of slaughter are scrambled for by excited crowds of pilgrims from all over the country, determined to procure relics of the deed and mementoes of its perpetrator.

Is it that the newspapers cultivate these

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low ideals in the people, or do the people demand these low ideals of the papers ?

Matthew Arnold once remarked that a people have the papers they deserve

A newspaper fundamentally is a commercial enterprise. If the people do not buy it, it must cease to be printed. And if the people will buy the papers that subliminate murderers, and will not buy the papers that do not, the blame must lie wholly with the public themselves.

I suppose that the punishment for murder being death accounts for some of this deplorable magnification of the criminal in such cases.

The most atrocious rape by a filthy tramp perpetrated upon a helpless little lady in her teens in a lonely wood provokes only a languid interest, because the unspeakable brute cannot be hanged for it—nor even flogged. The question of the sentence of death for murder is often discussed, and perhaps the halo some of the papers place on the brows of the convicted murderer may



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be regarded as a good reason for abolishing the capital sentence.

In practice only abominable cowardly murders are visited with death. Mothers who slay their new-born infants are now never hanged, and where there are any really mitigating circumstances the sentence is almost always reduced by the Home Secretary to penal servitude for life, which in fact means about eighteen years.

I cannot myself see what claim to live a man can validly put forward who has slaughtered a helpless fellow-creature in cold blood. He is a danger to the community of an awful kind. He has calmly taken away another's life and has thus justly forfeited his own.

The real valid argument against capital punishment is that being irrevocable, a mistake cannot be righted, and if a wrong person has been hanged and the real murderer is subsequently discovered or the innocence of the hanged man established, no reparation is possible.

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The only possible answer to such an argument against the death sentence and execution is that such mistakes do not occur, which answer after all is and can be only an assumption and perhaps not always a justifiable one

A man called Habron was undoubtedly sentenced to death for a murder of which Peace, when about to be hanged for another murder, confessed himself guilty—and Peace gave the police information that satisfied them that he and not Habron had done the deed. Habron had been visited by the executioner to estimate the drop necessary for his height and weight. In cases other than murder mistakes are undoubtedly made, but only on rare occasions. Reparation of a kind can be and has been made in such cases, but nothing can be done to recompense a corpse buried in quicklime in a prison yard.

No imagination can adequately picture the anguish of an innocent man condemned in error and executed.

*Conscia mens recti famæ mendacia ridet,*  
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## *The Apotheosis of Murderers*

but it laughs with more difficulty at the gallows and the quicklime grave!

We may, however, comfort ourselves with the certain knowledge that every care possible to human minds and hearts is expended on the prevention of such an awful catastrophe by the Judge and the Secretary of State in every case of capital punishment.

## XI

### LORD BLANK RAISED FROM THE DEAD

A MR. SWAFFER I see in the papers has been talking to the spirit of Lord "Blank" at the Queen's Hall at a gathering with Sir Marshall Hall in the chair. That a shrewd lawyer, who certainly must know what is evidence and what is not, should countenance these performances where light is excluded seems strange. Why should the blaze of illumination that surrounded Lord "Blank" in life be denied to his spirit? The poor thing seems doomed to wander in unfamiliar eclipse. The audience, it appears, were told that he wears a flannel suit where he now is. So in that strange place from which he was summoned by Mr Swaffer there must be grass and sheep and looms and expert tailors and button-makers. But that adds nothing to the wonders of Sir Oliver Lodge's Ray-  
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## *Lord Blank Raised from the Dead*

mond, whose habits in the other world necessitate tobacco plantations, and whisky distilleries, and factories for aerated waters.

I suppose we must accept it as a fact that there are persons perfectly sane who honestly believe these grotesque propositions.

Throughout human history there have always emerged persons whose minds delight in marvels ; they would derive no pleasure from, and take no interest in, a witch who only walked along a road, but when she mounts her broomstick and sails in the moonlight across the country a thousand feet from the ground she immediately commands their vivid appreciation and fervid faith.

Even when Napoleon, summoned to a "sitting" in New York, humoured his audience by conversing in a French deeply imbued with an American accent, the gaping believers took it to be a pleasing condescension on the part of the great man ; and their belief in his being present among them remained inexpugnable.

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Most of us, I suppose, adhere to the principle that it is wise, and indeed right, not to believe that anyone has the power to alter or suspend the laws of nature as we know them from experience.

If a person tells me that he can suspend, in the case of his own or somebody else's body, the law of gravitation and make that body leave the earth and float without physical support, I begin by declining to believe it. If he proceeds to proffer a demonstration of his power in a darkened room, I still disbelieve in his asserted power, and I do so because I think it is more probable that he is trying to deceive me, or is himself deceived, than that the law of gravitation can ever be abolished anywhere in the universe by anybody.

Whenever I am invited to believe that a law of nature, as I know it, is broken, I will not believe it. If there is any other possible solution, I disbelieve in the miraculous nature of any exhibition of supposed powers presented to me.

## *Lord Blank Raised from the Dead*

In all the proffered marvels at these spirit seances the possible solutions are, that darkness obscures what the light would reveal ; that there is certainly the possibility of fraud ; and that self-deception and hysteria are quite common to human beings of both sexes where fraud is absent.

The dreary bathos of what the disembodied or embodied spirits are supposed to say covers the whole performance with a sad coat of vulgarity, and ought to fill those who believe in it with a dull despair at a future state that offers them nothing but a ghastly eternity of the flat commonplace.

Ancient superstitions have been of some service to mankind, for as Burke remarked " Superstition is the religion of feeble minds " ; in it weak souls have found a help and resource unnecessary to the strong. But what is there to help anyone in his pilgrimage through this world in the banal twaddle of mediums in darkened rooms. What advantage could anyone gain by thinking he heard Lord " Blank " talking the same talk,

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no better and no worse, that he was wont to emit when he lived in London.

If he or we have souls to save, what help towards that end can emerge from such puerilities? Those who are doing the work of the world, who are striving to reach some worthy goal over the bogs and pitfalls of life, struggling forward with eyes fixed on the distant hills of God, will not stop to listen to the twaddle of a futile ghost in a flannel coat and a pitch-dark room

Is this the end of our vaunted Progress?  
Is this the last improvement on the faded faith of our benighted ancestors?

They believed that there was indeed a resurrection of the dead, and they clasped that faith to their hearts.

It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

So when this corruptible shall have put



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on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

There is no power nor glory in what purports to reach those who attend sittings in darkened rooms from the spirits of the dead ; and where nothing can be proved, if a choice is to be made I prefer the ancient faith to the modern credulity.

## XII

### ENGLAND MADE "SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY" I

IN my youth the sole object of taxation was to raise money to defray the cost of the various services necessary for the proper conduct and protection of a civilised state. No other end was contemplated. This was recognised universally, and to pay the taxes was accordingly regarded as a necessary duty, cheerfully fulfilled, and anyone who discovered that by some mistake he had withheld what he should properly have paid was expected, and often not in vain, to pay the amount into the Treasury as "conscience money."

There have of late years arisen individuals and parties who seem to care little for the legitimate objects of taxation, but rather seek to use it as an engine for attacking

## *England Made "Safe for Democracy"!*

accumulated wealth and for effecting a general redistribution of it.

The super-tax is applauded not so much as a means of meeting the country's enormous debts, but rather as an ingenious method of attacking wealth and preventing its accretion, and the death duties are a still more drastic application of the same device.

If this object were achieved and accumulated wealth were confiscated and distributed equally to all, absolute chaos would manifestly be the result.

Why an appalling disaster should be the ultimate goal aimed at by reasonable people escapes my intelligence. At present the accumulated wealth confiscated to the State is transferred, not to capital account, not to buying back the national debt, but to a variety of purposes the dubiety of whose value to the nation is often apparent.

Far-reaching are the ill effects to which such a system, if persisted in, must lead, though they may for a time be concealed.

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Thrift is so discouraged as to appear foolishness. Enterprises of great pith and moment waste away or are not even adventured from lack of free capital, incentive to bold commercial investment is sapped and deflated, and noble free institutions decay and come to naught because their proper source of support is dried up.

Gradually the State tends to take over all the independent enterprises in the country, railways, mines, building, food supply, and even libraries, all of which have been evolved through the untrammelled energy of an imaginative people.

As wealth is steadily penalised, and savings confiscated and wasted by the intrusion of the Government into all the avenues of free enterprise, and by the erection at vast expense of superfluous and redundant public departments and ministries, all the commercial courage and far-seeing adventure of the people becomes frozen out of its heart under the gelid hand of a soulless and crushing officialdom. Slowly and surely all the fine aspira-

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tions associated with personal and corporate liberty are inevitably crushed in the deadly grasp of Government departments.

Slowly and surely our lives from the cradle to the grave become ordered for us by rules and regulations, till everyone is shaped to the Government pattern, and a man may not even make the windows of his own house what shape he chooses, nor the rooms what height suits him, without the exasperating interference of a condescending Government official.

Deprived of our personal freedom, despoiled of our savings, thrift made a folly, enterprise an offence, the old liberty of England is passing away under a tyranny to which the gentle rule of the Stewarts was perfect freedom.

The world is, I suppose, as far as England is concerned, in the phrase of Dr. Wilson of America "safe for democracy." But in democracy as we know it here, power is not posited with the wisest and best in the country, but with the mass of ordinary un-

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distinguished millions of both sexes who employ their strength to penalise the aristocracy of the mind, crush originality of character, confiscate the rewards of enterprise, and draw all things down to one common banal level. A snivelling internationalism is to take the place of a sanguine honest patriotism. We are to turn our backs on our European allies and embrace our European enemies. The Army and Navy are to be reduced to impotence, and our shores left bare to any invader, while our crushing taxes are to be spent in encouraging millions of indolent people to live upon doles rather than work.

If a bricklayer ventures to do an honest day's work for an honest day's wage something called a union drives him out of his craft to starve, and the Government representing the "safe democracy" looks on with cold indifference, if it does not abet the denial of personal freedom and the merciless crushing of virtuous industry.

If this thing called a union decrees a strike, and a workman ventures to fulfil

## *England Made "Safe for Democracy"!*

his contract with his employers as an honest man, his house is surrounded by a roaring crowd who terrify him and his trembling wife and children till he agrees to break his contract, and this is called "peaceful picketing," and the Government lifts no finger to protect that honest workman.

These are some of the beautiful manifestations of our condition now that England is made "safe for democracy."

## XIII

### ON WORDS

I SUPPOSE every writer who publishes his lucubrations professes to have some regard for the English language, though I do not know that they entertain the zeal that filled Dr Johnson when he called upon us all "to make some struggles for our language"

It must happen in these days that newspapers are read more persistently than any other form of publication, and that accordingly the preservation of the purity and propriety of English lies very much in the hands of the editors of the Press

When it is remembered that they suffer an everlasting pressure towards slang expressions and uneducated spelling exercised from across the Atlantic, it must be acknowledged that the great Daily Papers do on

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the whole set a fine example of good English properly spelt.

The Americans have many engaging qualities, but their influence upon the English language is displeasing to English men of letters. They have no respect for the pedigree of words, and obliterate the French conveyance to us of many of our Latin words such as "honour" and the like by spelling them without the *u*, and they spell generally in a manner that has no authority behind it but the will of ill-informed compositors.

They refuse to employ a finely and correctly derived word such as "telegraph" and substitute for it "wire," which means something quite different; and similarly, a "bicycle" with them becomes a "cycle"; and these solecisms cross the Atlantic and are quickly absorbed by our own people. Then in their utterance the vowel sounds tend all to become alike, and all approximate to the sound of *a* in "hard": a "dog" becomes a "darg," the "world" becomes the "warld."

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But very likely such changes in vocal utterance are inevitable when countries are separated by oceans, and probably the South American Spanish shows similar divergencies from the speech of the mother country.

A diverting and informing book might well be written on the strange idioms we all use, and the false and incorrect use of words that are gradually creeping into daily speech, and on the derivative meaning of many words in daily use that are quite unsuspected by those who employ them.

How many people, for instance, have the faintest idea of what they are talking about when they say that something or somebody is "the cynosure of every eye"? Cynosure is the Greek word *κυνόσουρα*, which literally means the dog's tail, and was the name given to a part of the constellation of Ursa Minor in which was the Pole Star.

The Pole Star being almost exactly above the pole of the earth's axis of revolution, all the heavens appear to revolve round it while it remains itself stationary—the most notable

## *On Words*

object in the sky—and thus is the cynosure of every eye.

A good many people would be in difficulties if asked to explain what "halcyon days" really mean. "Halcyon" in Latin is a bird which was supposed to hatch its eggs in the sea, and required a perfect calm for the purpose.

How many people know exactly what they mean when they talk of "kith and kin"? "Kith" means "known"; it is from the same root as "uncouth," which means "unknown," and so "uncommon." At one time uncouth meant rare and precious, but now means uncommon in the sense of clumsy or awkward. "Kith and kin" therefore means those known to us, i.e. our friends and our kinsfolk.

"Pancgyric" now means a speech or essay in superlative praise of someone. Its derivation is far travelled from the Greek *πάς* and *ἄγυρις*, i.e. a gathering together of all the people. And as such gatherings in Greece were made the occasion of

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public laudations of individuals, panegyric has now come to mean only such laudation, and its real meaning is totally lost. I don't know why it is not spelt "panagyric."

Johnson derives the word "poltroon," which he spells poltron, from *pollice truncato*, "with the thumb cut off," alluding to those who cut off their own thumbs to avoid military service, and so meaning a coward and shirker. The word seems now to have come to mean something a little different from a mere coward, and implies a fool of a contemptible kind.

"Solecism" is another word in quite common use of the derivation of which few are aware. It comes from the Greek *σολαικισμός*. The Greek colonists at Σόλοι became noted for speaking a barbarous and corrupt Greek (this has happened to English in certain countries!), and thus a Solecism came to mean a wrong use of words. It generally is used to mean an error in a phrase rather than in a word.

I am afraid the newspapers are guilty of

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writing of a "suspicious" parcel or consignment; this is a sad lapse! a parcel can no more be suspicious than it can be terrified or jealous.

They also use "aggravate" to mean "annoy," which is quite wrong. You can aggravate an offence or a pleasure, but you cannot aggravate a person, except perhaps by a long course of succulent food.

"Expletive" is not a naughty word, but something used to fill up a space which would otherwise be empty. There is no reason why the added word should have an evil significance.

"Phenomenal" does not mean "extraordinary." A phenomenon (*φαινόμενον*) is something made manifest, displayed, or brought to light—there is no meaning of "remarkable" in the word.

The *Westminster Gazette* wrote in a leading article that a certain happening would not only be disastrous but calamitous, thus making a disaster something less unfortunate than a calamity.

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"Disaster" is derived from *astrum*, a star, and therefore dates from astrological times of belief in the possible bad influence of stars upon human events

"Calamitous" is probably derived from *cado*, to fall Pompey is said to have written the word, not *calamitas*, but *cadamitas*

I do not appreciate the assigning to a calamity of a catastrophe greater than that of a disaster

Dictionaries have always seemed to me to lack that for which they should be most valuable They never tell us the fine shades of meaning conveyed by words catalogued as synonyms

For example, if we look out "sarcastic" in a dictionary we shall probably find it suggested that its meaning is the same as ironical, caustic, sardonic, cynical, and satirical

But there is a distinct difference of meaning in these six excellent English words, all but the last of which are derived from Greek

## On Words

"Sarcastic" comes from *σαρκάζω*,<sup>1</sup> to strip off the flesh, but is now used to imply the lighter forms of banter and repartee.

"Ironical," Greek *εἰρων*, a dissembler, implies the use of words contrary to their meaning derisively; as, for example, to a notoriously fast motor driver, "of course you never exceed the speed limit!"

"Caustic": a caustic remark implies less flippancy than either a sarcastic or an ironical one. Grave and noble persons may on occasion make caustic remarks who would hardly condescend to make sarcastic ones. It comes from the Greek *καίω*, to burn.

"Sardonic" has a curious derivation from *σαρδόνιον*, a plant of Sardinia that was so bitter that it was said to distort the face of anyone who ate it; and with us the word is better used to describe the expression of the face, e.g. "a sardonic smile," than the quality of a remark, and the expression in-

<sup>1</sup> So "sarcophagus" means an eater of flesh, hence a coffin in which the body was placed with quicklime, and thus the word came to mean any coffin.

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icated is that of a rather grim disagreement or disapproval

"Cynical" in English means sneering, bitter, and is derived from *κύων*, genitive *κυνός*, a dog

This is a very unhappy instance of faulty observation, which suggests that dog like means "snarling," whereas the dog should suggest love, loyalty, and self sacrifice to a true observer

"Satirical" a satirical remark is one that conveys ridicule and even perhaps a jeer, but in a gentlemanlike form and manner

A satire holds up to ridicule some opinion or practice or class of people, whereas a lampoon is directed to the holding up to ridicule of some individual. The word has nothing to do with the Greek *Σάτυρος*, a Satyr, but comes from the Latin word *satira* or *satyra*, which was a particular kind of poetry

Another example of the want of fine distinction in the meaning of words given in dictionaries as synonyms may be found in



the words "jocose," "jocund," "droll," "hilarious," "funny," "amusing," "merry," and "diverting," all of which may be found given as synonyms of each other in dictionaries.

I think there is a shade of difference in the meaning of all these words.

"Jocose" means laughter-provoking in a witty, clever manner. Latin *jocosus*.

"Jocund": Latin *jocundus*, means happy, cheerful, mirthful.

"Droll"—a droll person is one who provokes mirth by bringing incongruous ideas into juxtaposition, and by wit with an element of surprise and of the unexpected in it.

"Hilarious": an hilarious person is one whose high spirits cause him to laugh exuberantly whether the joke be good or bad.

"Funny": this adjective is used in two quite different senses. Firstly, it means an amusing person whose talk diverts without it being really witty or clever.

Secondly, it is now often used to mean that a person or an act is not at all proper

or correct, e g "That was a funny thing for that girl to have done," meaning that what she did was improper and in bad taste Johnson gives "fun" as "a low cant word", 'funny' he does not give at all

Amusing an amusing person is one whose conversation is entertaining and felicitous, but short of forcing laughter in his audience

"Merry" a merry person is one who is himself addicted to mirth, the word does not mean that he makes others mirthful

"Diverting" a diverting person means one who is amusing, but with more distinction and wit than is displayed by the merely amusing one

To take another interesting instance, the words 'conceited,' "proud," and "vain" are all treated as meaning the same in dictionaries

"Vain" Latin *vanus*, "empty," as in "the people imagine a vain thing", and this derivative meaning attaches to the word in the old correct English of the Bible

Now the word has come generally to mean that a person so described is inordinately

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given to dwelling on any good qualities he or she may possess.

A beautiful woman may be vain of her appearance—a clever man of his abilities.

The distinction between a vain and a conceited person is that the first does possess the qualities and the second does not.

Conceit really deceives those inflicted with it into thinking themselves better than they are.

It is not conceited for a truly beautiful woman to dwell inordinately upon her appearances ; such a woman is vain.

A proud person is one who properly values worthy qualities which are truly his or hers, but who values them in silence.

Johnson gives as synonyms of "weighty" the words "ponderous" and "heavy" ; but if weighty and ponderous are used to qualify men's speech, the first always conveys a complimentary meaning and the second always a quite uncomplimentary one.

Sometimes two English words derived similarly from the same Latin word are used to mean different things.

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"Derisive" and "ridiculous" are both derived from *rideo*, to laugh. But a derisive remark is one where the speaker laughs at something or somebody, and a ridiculous remark is one that shows the speaker himself to be absurd and silly.

A valuable book might be written on words, tracing their derivative meaning and their current meaning in ordinary speech, and setting out the fine shades of meaning that really distinguish so many words jumbled together in dictionaries as synonyms.

There are many fine English words derived from the Greek which have no synonym, such as "empirical," from *ἐμπειρία*, experience. An empirical opinion, therefore, is one based solely on observation and experience, and the word implies a disregard of other methods of arriving at that opinion.

"Fustian" is another fine word with no synonym, though derived from French and not Greek. It originally meant a material made of some inferior substance got up to imitate a better one; hence in speech and

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writing it came to mean a turgid and bombastic style intended to appear fine and splendid, when in truth it is no such matter.

Some words change their meaning to the actual opposite of what they once conveyed. For instance, "high-minded" is now used exclusively in a laudatory sense, but in the old Prayer Book containing the service to commemorate the Restoration allusion is made to "the wicked designs of those traiterous, heady, and high-minded men, who," etc., and in the Psalms we find, "Lord, I am not high-minded. I have no proud looks."

Another example of this tergiversation of the meaning of a word is found in the present use of "officious," which is anything but complimentary; but Dr. Johnson, writing of Robert Levett, said :

officious, innocent, sincere, of every  
friendless name the friend;

using the word obviously in a laudatory sense, as implying "doing good offices for others."

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But if I go on I shall be myself writing that book about words which I think so desirable.

Trench once wrote :

There are cases in which more knowledge of more value may be conveyed by the history of a word than by the history of a campaign.

## XIV

### ON FALSE QUOTATIONS

MANY years ago, when, under my father's kindly guidance my literary taste was formed, I well remember his saying: "There is no necessity laid upon you to quote, but if you quote, quote correctly."

Accordingly it has always been my habit to verify my quotations in everything I write.

And, indeed, I have at last come to feel that a false quotation is an inevitable sign of the second-rate in any writer who so fails in his duty to another author.

You may feel absolutely certain, for instance, that John Morley will not be found to make a false quotation from one end to the other of all his works; and it is with a shock of pained surprise that I find such writers as Matthew Arnold and James An-

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thony Froude making careless and indefensible mistakes when quoting from Shakespeare and Keats !

In his *Essays on Criticism* Matthew Arnold gives Hamlet's words as

There's a divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough hew them as we will,

instead of "*how* we will" ; and he makes Keats write :

" Moving waters at their priestlike task  
Of *cold* ablution round Earth's human shores,"

instead of "*pure* ablution " ; which is really a quite unpardonable mutilation of the text—and by a Professor of Poetry of Oxford !

And further, this is perpetrated not only in his first edition but in subsequent ones, so that there is not possible the excuse of a misprint. It is a vulgar alteration persisted in.

Such a misquotation might perhaps be excused in a Philistine trying to quote poetry which is a field of wit unfamiliar to him, but in the Apostle of Culture ! alas ! alas !

A misquotation by Froude of one of the



## *On False Quotations*

most noble lines in Shakespeare is equally inexcusable, and is the more extraordinary as it occurs in the last chapter of his *Oceana*, in which he is extolling the glory of England and its Empire over the seas. He gives the great line in Richard II as :

*A precious gem set in the silver sea,*

instead of :

*This precious stone set in the silver sea.*

Thus to alter a word in the great line that lies close to the heart of every Englishman is really an act of gross impropriety.

It is impossible for those of us who love Letters to avoid feeling that such misquotations indicate in those who make them a kind of slipshod lack of reverence for the Kings of Literature. A critic who himself is guilty of such ineptitudes cannot exercise the influence over us that he would if we felt he were incapable of them.

Matthew Arnold's gospel of sweetness and light, coupled with the ceaseless contempt

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he expressed for the solid middle classes of his countrymen, as we look back across the majestic uprising of that class in the great war, seem rather foolish and lacking in vision

Sweetness and light were all very well for Victorian drawing rooms in a time of profound peace, but when the supreme test of character came with the stern call to arms, greater and deeper qualities were needed, and were found in full and glorious measure from one end of the country to the other as those despised Philistines went marching to battle silent but undismayed

Matthew Arnold lacked patriotism, he was for ever acclaiming every foreign country as better than our own. He had no value for qualities and characteristics in people not to his own taste

He was a very charming person whose sweetness and light precluded him from ever being inspired by enthusiasm or indignation about anything. His poetry is sadder and more full of tears than that of any poet of his time. Perhaps he would have written

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happier verses if he had slashed about him with deep indignation at wrong things ; and had lifted up his heart to God in throbbing thankfulness for the beautiful and glorious things of life.

Froude was a splendid patriot and a master of glowing passionate prose ; he brought up from the past the amazing achievements of the *Forgotten Worthies* of England. He extolled our magnificent forefathers and believed in the greatness of our future. A fine, wholesome, hearty, helpful writer, and if he was on occasion writing with such rushing enthusiasm as to quote even Shakespeare erroneously we must not too straightly censure him. Much may be forgiven him, for he loved much.

## XV

### ON PARADOX

THE Greek word *παράδοξος* means "contrary to opinion," but we have, I think, come to use the word "paradox" to convey the idea of opposite and contradictory statements placed in a startling manner in juxtaposition, or of a statement so entirely at variance with received opinion as to startle those to whom it is made.

As an instance of this last kind of paradox I find in a book I am reading .

If clerks do not try to shirk their work, our whole great commercial system breaks down It is breaking down, under the inroad of women who are adopting the unprecedented and impossible course of taking the system seriously and doing it well

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If this is only meant for a joke, so is the whole book ; for this is only a sample of the kind of paradox that covers its 293 pages. If it is not said in jest, we are to conclude that a merchant who would be successful should fill his office with clerks who shirk their work.

The writer should go into business at once and achieve success by this easy device.

Farther on in the same book, following up the same idea, the author says :

Modern women defend their office with all the fierceness of domesticity. They fight for desk and typewriter as for hearth and home, and develop a sort of wolfish wifehood on behalf of the invisible head of the firm. That is why they do office work so well; and that is why they ought not to do it.

Why in the world a woman should be precluded from doing good serviceable work because she does it well escapes my intelligence. My ordinary jogtrot mind is

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too simple to follow these coruscations of wit, or are they deeps of penetrating insight?

When I am confronted page after page with such phrases as "lawless, limitless devouring decorum" I feel that the double alliteration of "l's" and "d's" is no doubt dexterous; but how decorum can be lawless and limitless and devouring escapes me, though I struggle vainly after these verbal gymnastics with every desire to receive light and information. Then I read that "a man who thinks much about success must be the drowsiest sentimentalist; for he must be always looking back." I cannot escape from harbouring the suspicion that this pronouncement is made precisely because everybody else believes that success attends the wideawake practical man who skilfully anticipates the future.

"Friendship," I read, "must be physically dirty if it is to be morally clean."

I have never found it the least necessary to be dirty in order to secure and cement and retain friendships, and I am quite certain

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my friendships have been morally clean, and this smashing dogmatism is not always supported by sound illustrations or metaphors. "Straight lines," it is announced, "that are not parallel must meet at last." This is only true if they happen to lie in the same plane, and as they may lie in an infinite number of possible different planes the assertion as made is wildly inaccurate.

Again, in an article inspired by what is commonly known as the "little Englander" spirit, suggesting that our pride in our Empire is "both weak and perilous," we read: "We should no more dream of pitting Australian armies against German than of pitting Tasmanian sculpture against French." This was written before the Great War, and it does not do to make cocksure prophecies and then found arguments upon them, because subsequent events may prove the prophecies entirely false and the arguments consequently groundless. It is all very bright and clever, but such a bad shot as this makes the reader entertain misgivings as to the

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general value and soundness of the writer's opinions and contentions, and these misgivings are received without vehement reluctance when we observe that the whole book is devoted to explaining that everything in every field of effort and opinion in England is altogether deplorable, our democracy is wrong, our aristocracy is wrong, our party system is wrong, our Empire is wrong, our public schools are wrong, our board schools are wrong, our charities are wrong and in his own picturesque verbality the whole book is a roaring cataract of catastrophic criticism and caustic condemnation of everything about him

It is no doubt startling to be confronted throughout a writer's compositions with casual allusions to wild domesticity, higher anarchy, tumultuous peace, uproarious quietude, but after a few pages it becomes like a meal of nothing but pepper and mustard

An acrobat who turns wheels and stands on his head is not much use for pulling a load up the hill of life. He certainly brings



## *On Paradox*

the passer-by to a stand for a moment, but the latter soon resumes his way with a laugh of appreciation for the man's dexterity, and gets on with his real business.

"Cleverness," says this diverting verbal acrobat, "kills wisdom: that is one of the few sad and certain things."

In this he may be right in a few cases, in which I hope his own is not included, but it is a hard saying that a wise man cannot also be clever because if he were it would deprive him of his wisdom.

However, if a wise man cannot be clever, and a clever man cannot be wise, there fortunately remains some hope for those of us who are stupid or foolish.

## XVI

### ON CRUELTY

THE first necessity of the mind for the forming of a right judgment upon cruelty is to purge it of all current prejudice and to think clearly.

Three hundred years ago persons of beautiful serene and gracious character remained entirely unmoved by the fearful tortures inflicted upon human beings by the ministers of the Government and the executants of the law.

So beloved and gentle a man as Sir Thomas More himself watched a poor young man being racked and tortured until he was maimed for life ; so sweet a person as John Evelyn never reprobates human tortures throughout his whole diary, though some slight approach to modern opinion is evinced by his refusing to go and see a horse attacked by a fierce dog as a show and spectacle.

## *On Cruelty*

Later on we find Fanny Burney in her diary expressing her astonishment at the extraordinary views of Oliver Goldsmith about crime and its punishment, in that in the *Vicar of Wakefield* he actually expresses the opinion that people should not be hanged merely for theft.

We must suppose the Fanny Burney was very much like other ladies of her time and was not at all of an exceptionally cruel nature.

Then a little later still we have Leigh Hunt being fiercely prosecuted by the Government for publicly expressing abhorrence at the infliction of a punishment of a thousand lashes on a man's naked back.

Then if we come to the present day, how few people really think clearly and without prejudice on the subject. A Spaniard with whom I talked not long ago said to me: "Our bull-fighting is not anything to be compared with your otter-hunting for cruelty. You do not make much fuss about that, but you are very vocal about our bull-fighting.

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The bull is a fierce animal, and it requires great skill and courage for a man to go into the arena and fight a bull, and he is sometimes killed, whereas you English people who hunt the otter up and down your rivers require no skill or courage, and can receive no hurt beyond, perhaps, wet feet. There is no question about our bull fighting being much the more defensible sport of the two."

Unless you keep a clear mind it is difficult to meet an argument of this kind. and with all the desire to think fairly and clearly I do not myself perceive what answer there is to it from anyone who hunts the otter or supports that pastime, except that the Spaniard forgot about the wretched horses who suffer in the bull fight, and that the English objection to that spectacle arises as much out of sympathy for the horses as for the bull.

Then I put it to myself that I do certainly feel most vehemently that there is great difference between shooting a robin and

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shooting a pheasant. But where is the real difference if you purge your mind of prejudice and think about it quite fairly, and why is it cruel and barbarous to shoot a robin and not cruel and barbarous to shoot a pheasant? It may be said that we eat the pheasant and might eat the robin, but I think I would rather choke than do so, so passionate is my own prejudice against destroying a robin redbreast.

Then let us consider the present law in England relating to cruelty to animals. It is entirely based on a distinction between tame or domestic animals and wild animals. But a wild animal can suffer pain precisely in a similar manner as can a tame animal; why should it not be protected from it?

If a horse is ill-treated, he who ill-treats it is prosecuted, and quite rightly as we think; but a stag, which has the same capacity for suffering, the same senses, the same organism, may be treated in the most abominable manner, which I will not disturb my peace of mind here to describe in detail,

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and no one can be held blameworthy before the law.

All the animals in the world are utterly in our power and dominion, and I should have thought that to every one of them as Christians and gentlemen we owe a duty to protect it from torture and outrage.

This distinction between wild and tame animals, which really owes its existence to the Englishman's love of cruel sports, enables those who inflict dreadful sufferings upon animals for the advance of knowledge, scientific and physiological, to say: "You torture animals to amuse yourselves; you hunt stags, you hunt foxes, you hunt otters only as a pastime, but we never inflict pain upon any animals except for the noble purpose of spreading and increasing knowledge, and to attack us and leave the others uncondemned is illogical and ridiculous."

There is no doubt something is to be said for that argument, and so we come down at last to the bedrock principle that to inflict pain and suffering of a severe kind on any

## *On Cruelty*

animal, tame or wild, not for its own individual benefit, is a wrong act and one which should be prohibited by law.

Then we shall find ourselves on unassailable ground, and those of us who advocate such a condition of law should be consistent if we can, and not ever practise or countenance or condone that which we condemn.

As to benefits accruing to the human race by means of so cowardly a thing as the infliction of severe anguish and misery upon helpless animals and even on dogs, I myself do not believe, if the balance be struck, and some possible physical benefits be weighed on one side against the certain moral degradation on the other, that mankind will be advanced.

Nothing we can gain in our bodies will recompense us for an extinction of pity in the human mind. Indeed, I will not believe we are meant to benefit ourselves by such horrid means.

After all, it is ultimately, and all the time, a matter not of science but of conduct ; and

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such a means of investigation must ever place physiology out of the sphere of the noble sciences.

What right has the physiologist to place himself above morals? What right has he to call upon the world to place the tree of knowledge above the tree of life?

All the qualities of manliness and mercy which are the attributes of a brave man and a gentleman cry out against this usurpation.

Let us look up to the beautiful and compassionate ideals of life, and not down to the vivisection troughs and disease propagation of the registered laboratories.



## XVII

### MY HOME, "THE FORD"

THE "FORD" was reputed to be haunted when it came into my possession : a wicked uncle had drowned his two young nephews in the ancient fish-pond, and their pathetic little ghosts most certainly wandered on the bank every year on the night of the dark deed.

A fair nun who had yielded to the dreams of youth, and in vain prayed not to desire the glorious pangs of passion, had been buried alive in the thick walls of the house in the far-off days when the building was a monastery attached to the great abbey of Chertsey ; and to the wakeful listeners her sighs were audible in the long winter nights plainly distinguishable from the wailing of the winds around the leaning gables.

A secret stairway that went down into the foundations and ended in a subterranean

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passage, which had once led away to no one knew whither, had been filled up and securely cemented down by some occupier of the house who thought the dank air that crept up the vaulted steps savoured of the charnel house; and a bell brought from China in the days of the Commonwealth that hung between the gables over the porch had been known to toll by itself, moved by no mortal hands, prophesying evil.

Other but less sinister legends hung about the ancient edifice. In the early years of the eighteenth century Voltaire was said to have visited the house during the three years that he spent in England after his second unjust incarceration in the Bastille, and Hume had later been entertained here on occasion.

Then the old place sank down and down while generations came and went, and owners changed and departed, until there came a time when the windows were taken out of what was once the refectory, it was used as a hen-roost, and the splendid oak floor was buried feet deep in guano

## *My Home; "The Ford"*

An old inhabitant of the neighbouring village of Chobham half a mile away remembers twenty different occupiers of the house since he was a boy; and it was the current saying in the whole parish that no one could ever remain three years in the place.

My immediate predecessor took his own life before his residence here had reached the fateful period; and when I fell ill at Cardiff before I had lived three years in the house my demise was regarded as certain and foreordained by everyone in the neighbourhood of Chobham with a decent respect for tradition. But in defiance of legend, prophecy, warnings, and ghosts I still live, and have established lovable relations with the old place which are destined, I believe, to abide between it and me and mine as long as it shall please God.

No one knows, and now I suppose no one ever will know, whose were the hands that raised this ancient homestead.

Of old its name was St. Julien, and I

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suppose *Julien* is the French equivalent of Julian, which in its turn is a variant of Julius, and in spite of the great apostate the name is revered among Christians as having been borne by ten Saints, and is honoured among all men as having been rendered illustrious by the great Caesar. The history of the house is entirely lost. The Record Office has been searched in vain, the British Museum interrogated without result, parish registers and records have been fruitlessly ransacked, and even *Notes and Queries* yields no response to inquiries into the origin and history of the venerable building.

That it once boasted a chapel seems certain from the discovery at the bottom of the fish pond when I had it dug out in 1923, of some beautiful stone tracery that must have adorned some consecrated window in the sixteenth century.

The entire trunks of immense oaks from the immemorial forest that once covered the surrounding country, cut rudely square, were requisitioned to sustain the floors and

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## *My Home, "The Ford"*

roofs, and, hardened by centuries, have now acquired a strength and durability that thousands of years will be powerless to impair.

Built more for eternity than time, the indestructible building has witnessed "the waxing and waning of religions and the entire change of the face of nature" from forest to grazing farms for miles around; nothing has survived the centuries of change but the sound of the bells, in the old church tower of Chobham, which once echoed through the woods and whose plaintive call now comes and goes far and wide over the flat meadows full of ruminating cattle. As I stand now upon the ancient door, step worn down with the feet of long-forgotten dwellers in the old house, and look up at the gables that lean a little this way and that with the settlements and droopings of ages, the building seems to have slept for centuries while we men and women have been passing to and fro within, being its dreams, sometimes dark and terrible, sometimes fair and holy.

## *Digressions*

The walls were half-timber for many centuries till some owner who, preferring a dry and warm inside to a picturesque outside, covered the entire fabric with a serviceable coating of roughcast

A vulgarian in yet more recent times superimposed on the roughcast sham half-timber arranged in fantastic impossible patterns and composed of plaster painted brown This must have been the same apostle of culture who erected on the top of the exquisite Elizabethan low wall between the lane and the garden an unspeakable iron railing with circles, scrolls, and spikes !

The poor old place shuddered and would not endure the desolating dominion of this individual, who indeed and in truth should be designated as a blighter , I do not wonder that all the outraged ghosts of five hundred years united their forces to eject him , he did not survive their three-year test of him

Without vanity I claim to have come down the winding lane to the house in 1911 as a saviour and restorer, setting to work forthwith

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## *My Home, "The Ford"*

to bind up its wounds and heal its scars. With reverent care I have brought to light the long-buried beams in the ceilings chamfered by hands forgotten ages ago. With swift rage I have swept away the abominable railing on the wall, and the insufferable brown plaster sham half-timber on the venerable countenance of the house ; and in all things treated the gracious old building with respect and affection.

The influences that fill all ancient houses have responded and met me with benedictions ; no threatening sounds or apparitions have visited this house of mine since it came full of trust and understanding into my hands ; an abiding sense of wholesome sweetness and peace pervades the quiet rooms, and if ever we unwittingly receive visitors from another world I am sure it will be angels that we shall entertain.

## XVIII

### ON PATRIOTISM

I AM no historian, yet it seems to me that greatness has been seldom achieved by men who were not filled with an abounding patriotism.

I expect if a nation were once to lose its patriotism it would soon fall away into decadence and produce neither great deeds nor great men.

When I was young, England was governed largely and most of the time by men who were steeped in the dismal principles of Bentham and Ricardo ; material prosperity was more to them than public faith. Every debatable subject was regarded from the point of view of a profit-and-loss account. If the Colonies cost England money, why, let them get away and be independent. If India was likely to be a trouble or expense,

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## *On Patriotism*

why, "perish India." Material considerations alone really mattered ; keep your eye on the public income and expenditure ; avoid any responsibilities abroad if they were the least likely to incur any honourable obligations.

Why waste money on a navy when we never meant to interfere in European affairs, except with dispatches written discreetly so that nothing really need follow any remonstrances we might make, or advice we might give ? Why keep an army on foot when no one threatened to invade us and we certainly never intended to land a single soldier on the Continent ? India ? well, if we really must keep India, raise an army out there and let India itself pay for it.

No one ever ventured to express a pride in the great dependencies scattered over the globe rising steadily in grandeur and greatness, looking across the seas to the mother country for countenance and support, and destined to grow aggregately into the most majestic Empire the world has ever seen.

## *Digressions*

The descent of man from a kind of ape of arboreal habits was almost universally accepted as one of the unarguable axioms of Science, and Herbert Spencer had reduced all things about us and within us to nothing but the inevitable results of a law of mechanics, matter and motion, and motion and matter, working in a dreary flux in obedience to a force unknown and unknowable

All the intellectual world with solemn faces accepted these grotesque and debasing theories of life and the universe without any the least lurking sense of the ghastly absurdity of the whole structure

It was, indeed, in the words of Burke, an age of "sophisters, economists, and calculators" !

Free will, and God, were snuffed out in this philosophy, and life and the world became nothing but a blind, joyless manifestation of inevitable law based on an unknowable Force.

Most of us soon tire of attempting to make the mind comprehend the mind, and are

## *On Patriotism*

quite aware that the finite can never comprehend the infinite. What does it profit to wander through the mazes of the incomprehensible to reach at last the unknowable?

In such a time it was inevitable that the fire of patriotism should burn low among those who lived in the gelid clasp of this forlorn Science.

Fortunately, I think it never reached the masses of the people, who were therefore able to retain their ancient faiths and sentiments, and could still warm their hearts with a love of their country.

The bottom of this wave of sterility of sentiment under the icy hand of Science was reached when Gordon was abandoned to his fate at Khartum.

I think that humiliation was too much for the English people, and the tide turned from the day of that noble soldier's betrayal and death.

The great war that brought us all suddenly face to face with death and wounds, in the houses of the great and equally in the

## *Digressions*

cottages of the poor, reawakened a wonderful and glorious patriotism from end to end of the whole Empire

Recruits poured in with such overwhelming enthusiasm that the authorities could not house them and over the sea came flocking hundreds of thousands of our kith and kin to fight beside us for the old home and the old flag

Froude once wrote "Two pieces of cold iron cannot be welded by the most ingenious hammering, at white heat they will combine of themselves"

Herbert Spencer and his unknowable Force, and the sophisters, economists, and calculators were all forgotten and less than nothing The simple call "For God and country" was enough to bring a thousand thousand Englishmen from every shire and from the ends of the earth to fight and die if need be that no alien foot should dare to desecrate

This blessed plot this earth this realm this Eng  
land !

## *On Patriotism*

This has left a record of stainless glory of self-sacrifice, of brotherly love, which is a very noble foundation on which to build an Empire.

But once more there is a menace, but no longer from the scientific professors and prigs. It comes from a collection of men who in the pretended cultivation of a principle of Internationalism repudiate all patriotism and are found closely associated with the enemies of our country, and in declared opposition and enmity to all our country's friends. They fiercely attack the institutions that have come down to us through long centuries of constructive effort, they declare it to be their intention to destroy the whole structure of Society, ignorant that like Samson they will themselves be buried in the ruins if they achieve their end.

This spirit will never produce any lofty or noble results, nor can it produce any great men. Nobody, not even the most self-deceived doctrinaire, can really love mankind in general as he can love his own nation

## *Digressions*

and people and country. If we look back through all history, the greatest men in whatever walk of life have ever been filled with a splendid patriotism.

If, with our majestic station upon the globe, a man born of our race cannot feel a humble thankfulness that that splendid privilege has been vouchsafed to him at his birth, the sooner he moves himself off to some other country that he thinks more suitable to him the better.

He will not be missed.

## XIX

### ON LOST OPPORTUNITIES

I BEGAN writing a very inadequate and sketchy diary in January 1882.

I wish I had thought of doing so ten years earlier; and had devoted some time and care to it.

In the 'eighties I was my father's private secretary and lived with him at 1 Sussex Square, a large corner house admirably fitted for the hospitalities in which he delighted.

Through the London season it was his habit in those days to give one dinner-party every fortnight and sometimes two on consecutive nights—generally of twenty-four people at a time.

As his secretary I had much to do with arranging these gatherings, so that those should meet who would derive most pleasure from each other's company.

## *Digressions*

To these parties came persons distinguished in all forms of intellectual life—Statesmen, Churchmen, Men of Letters, Painters, and Ambassadors. I did not then appreciate the remarkable opportunity that was mine for keeping a record of the conversations to which it was my privilege to listen.

Being constantly among such people I failed fully to appreciate the extreme interest that would in later years attach to notes taken at the time of these gatherings.

I did not at all realise that many of them would leave behind them great reputations, and that anything appertaining to their talk at such social meetings would hereafter be of extreme interest.

I think my father must have belonged to almost every literary club in London. He was a member of "The Club," of "Nobody's," of "The Grillon," and of the "Philobiblion." He used himself humorously to describe this last one as an association whose object it was to make rare books rarer. The members used to breakfast with



## *Lost Opportunities*

each other in routine. Whether any of these clubs still survive I do not know. He was also an F.R.S., although his strong opposition to vivisection was well known and had found powerful expression in a controversy conducted in the *Nineteenth Century* and the *Fortnightly* in 1881 and 1882.

He also had a wide knowledge and sincere love of music, and for many years was President of the Bach choir; and he counted among his friends who came to Sussex Square Jenny Lind, Joachim, and Sir Sterndale Bennett. Many artists frequented the house, of whom Sir William Boxall, Director of the National Gallery, was the most intimate and beloved, and I can now recall that my father was among the earliest to recognise and acclaim the supreme merit of Frank Holl as a portrait painter—a judgment posterity has confirmed.

In addition to these many and varied interests he was Lord Chief Justice of England, and had so high a reputation as an orator as to be known in the world as "silver-tongued Coleridge."

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I perceive now, when I am myself a grandfather, that as a youth I missed wonderful opportunities in not taking the trouble to keep a regular record of the conversations and discussions to which I listened

The scanty diary that I kept is now a source of tantalising regrets

For instance, I open it casually at this entry

26th of June, 1882    Lords Dalhousie and Sherbrooke, the Archbishop of Dublin, the Bishop of Truro, Sir Henry Holland, Sir Charles Bunbury, Lady Portsmouth, and others to dinner

The present deplorable condition of the House of Commons was much discussed  
"Bob Lowe" emphatic on its being due to the lowering of the franchise  
And that is all !

This Lord Dalhousie I remember as a fair young man who was then Lord in Waiting to Queen Victoria, and he had been in the Navy, and I think he lived in Carlton House

## *Lost Opportunities*

Terrace. Lord Sherbrooke was of course better known as "Bob Lowe." This Archbishop of Dublin was Trench, who was the poet. The Bishop of Truro was Benson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury; Sir Henry Holland was later in the Government and became Lord Knutsford; Sir Charles Bunbury was the eighth baronet; Lady Portsmouth was the sister of Lord Carnarvon, who was one of Disraeli's Cabinet.

I am the sole survivor of that gathering and of many another of like kind at 1 Sussex Square, and beyond those few exiguous words of my diary I now have no recollection of anything that passed.

In another entry I find that after a dinner-party, when the ladies had retired, I sat between Lowell the American Minister and Jowett the Master of Balliol, yet not a word have I put down beyond that quite uninteresting fact!

The diary is really a pathetic monument to lost opportunities!

At the present time we have plenty of, if

## *Digressions*

not too many, lives of all manner of folk, but to-day our habits are so changed that distinguished people in all walks of life have not so many opportunities as of old of meeting familiarly at some recognised hospitable table, where they can talk together ; and a record of the symposiums of the past would be all the more valuable as of a now lost field of intellectual performance.

As we look back through life, what roads to the delectable fields we have neglected to tread ; what treasures by the wayside we have been too indolent to stoop to and pick up ; what doorways to knowledge we have failed to press open ; what sweetness waited for us that we never went to meet ! and now it is too late !

The opportunity will never return

“ 'Tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone ! ”

## XX

### THE COUNTY OF DEVON

I BELIEVE that no spot in the whole world has produced such a glorious galaxy of great and good and famous men as that lovely county away down in the West. Wherever I have wandered over the earth, when I have heard the name of my beloved county spoken, my heart has beaten faster with an illimitable pride in the dear land of my birth. For in all forms of human endeavour the men of Devon have ever been in the van.

Far away in the reign of Elizabeth the great Empire of the English-speaking race was founded almost entirely by the intrepid imagination and unquenchable valour of the sailors of my county.

They looked out across the Western sea to unknown worlds beyond the setting sun, and with inextinguishable enterprise sailed

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away in their little cockle boats to find new continents and to circumnavigate the globe.

Davis set out from Dartmouth and left his name upon the map of the world.

Sir Humphrey Gilbert and his half-brother Sir Walter Raleigh dropped down with the tide from the same lovely harbour, the one to establish our first and oldest colony of Newfoundland, the other to found Virginia and name it after his Queen.

Gilbert was last seen sitting on his deck with the Bible on his knee and called across to the sister ship, "We are as near Heaven at sea as on land," and then the deep engulfed him.

Of Raleigh, Macaulay says :

the soldier, the sailor, the scholar, the courtier, the orator, the poet, the historian, the philosopher, whom we picture to ourselves sometimes reviewing the Queen's guard, sometimes giving chase to a Spanish galleon, then answering the chiefs of the country party in the House of Commons, then murmuring again one of his sweet

## *The County of Devon*

love-songs too near the ears of Her Highness's Maids of Honour, and soon after poring over the Talmud or collating Polybius with Livy.

This great man languished for twelve years in the Tower, and was sacrificed at last by the miserable James I to the importunity of the Spanish ambassador, and was beheaded on 26th of October, 1618, in Palace Yard, where the statue now stands of Richard Cœur de Lion.

"This is a sharp medicine," said he, feeling the edge of the axe, "but it is a physic that will cure all diseases."

And Drake, the ever invincible Drake of Tavistock, in a vessel smaller than most of the yachts at Cowes, went rolling down over the South Atlantic, and rounding the Horn sailed up the west coast of South America, fighting, capturing, and sinking every Spanish ship he could find; then all up the west coast of North America he explored, searching in vain for a channel back into the Atlantic.

## Digressions

Finding none he struck out across the vast Pacific till he lighted on the East Indies, through whose uncharted narrows he threaded his venturous course, then away again over the enormous Indian Ocean he sailed till he reached the Cape of Good Hope, and thence home at last, hoving in sight of the Lizard to fill all England with amazement as he reappeared to the ken of men, having been lost to sight and knowledge for nearly three years

Writing to Walsingham of this wonderful man and his exploit Edmund Tremayne said " His whole course of voyage hath shewed him to be of great valour, but my hap has been to see some particularities, and namely in this discharge of his company, as doth assure me that he is a man of great government, and that by the rules of God and His Book So as proceeding upon such foundation, his doings cannot but prosper "

On Plymouth Hoe he finished his game of bowls before he embarked with a fleet manned by Devon men to sink and destroy the gigantic Spanish Armada



## *The County of Devon*

He died on the sea where he had lived his glorious life, and his effigy looks out over the waves that had borne him round the world and which were his home in life and in death.

How can I write of Sir Richard Grenville of Bideford and his terrific battle in the *Revenge*? Caught and surrounded by the whole Spanish fleet at Florez, engaging alone sixteen huge galleons of the enemy, two and even three of them often attempting to board him at once, repulsing them with awful slaughter again and again, till only forty of his men were still alive and fit to fight, meeting every furious onslaught with furious triumph for fifteen hours, till the Spaniards lay exhausted in a circle round the unconquerable men of Devon, compelled to a reverence by such majesty of valour.

Old Bacon, roused from his cold philosophy by such a magnificent spectacle, writes of it thus :

This brave ship the *Revenge* being manned only with two hundred, soldiers and

## *Digressions*

mariners, whereof eighty lay sick, yet nevertheless after a fight maintained, as was said, of fifteen hours, and two ships of the enemy sunk by her side, besides many more torn and battered, and great slaughter of men, never came to be entered, but was taken by composition, the enemies themselves having in admiration the virtue of the commander, and the whole tragedy of that ship

Grenville, full of wounds, carried on board the Spanish Admiral's ship, in all honour, as he lay surrounded by the Spanish officers exclaimed in Spanish

Here die I, Richard Grenville, with a joyful and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do that hath fought for his country, Queen, religion, and honour

After which, we are told, " he gave up the ghost with great and stout courage, and no man could perceive any sign of heaviness in him "

## *The County of Devon*

Somewhere along the floor of the world, far beneath the waves which had for so long been his home, and upon which he had consummated his glory, lies the mortal part of that incomparable hero.

"Hardly," says Froude—himself a Devon man—"will those 300 Spartans who in the summer morning sate combing their long hair, for death, in the passes of Thermopylæ, have earned a more lofty estimate for themselves than this one crew of modern Englishmen."

Of Sir John Hawkins, another native of Devon who played a brave and effective part in the rout of the Spanish Armada, it must with regret be remembered that he was the first Englishman to capture negroes in Africa and sell them as slaves in the Spanish West Indies, and that in defiance of the direct prohibition of such a traffic by Philip the Second.

It is with still deeper regret that we find Queen Elizabeth approving of the horrid business.

These are only some of the gallant rovers

## *Digressions*

of the waves from Devon who established England as Queen of the sea, where she still reigns

And when we think of them with pride and thanksgiving it behoves us ever to remember that one and all of them were possessed by a quiet and simple piety ; fierce they were and 'valorous, but they were full of reverence, and they committed themselves with unquestioning faith to the care of Almighty God in all their glorious enterprises.

But Devon has not only sea captains of whom to boast, for in Monk, who made lustory and restored the monarchy, we have a famous soldier, and in the Great Duke of Marlborough we can claim a man who, though his personal character has not escaped censure, yet in the tented field left a record without a parallel in the annals of war ; for alone among supreme commanders he never lost a pitched battle, he never besieged a city he did not take, he never embarked upon a campaign he did not win ; and he did this

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## *The County of Devon*

always far from his base, with a powerful opponent in his own country.

Such, then, are some of the men of action who have been born and bred among the hills and valleys of Devon. In the arts of peace we have not perhaps so overwhelming a predominance, though in Sir Joshua Reynolds, who was once Mayor of Plymouth, we can claim one of the greatest painters of the British Isles, and in Cosway of Tiverton we may be proud of a supreme master of the lovely art of miniature painting.

Of poets we have but few, though there was one who made some verses and came from Ottery St. Mary; of him it is not for me to speak, nor of lawyers, though I have heard of three Judges, father, son, and grandson, in succession, who came up out of one sweet old home I know well away down in the valley of the Otter.

To have found a little niche or foothold in ground so sacred and noble is something about which a family may nurse a humble pride and quiet gratitude.

## *Digressions*

The desire of all of us sprung from that warm and generous soul is to keep alive to after time the everlasting renown of our beloved county of the West, and if we cannot ourselves add a stone to the Temple of its fame, at least so to live that we may cast no shadow upon its inviolable glory and loveliness

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